

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 10 September 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
10 SEPTEMBER 1968

LATE ITEM

Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

Premier Cernik arrived in Moscow
this morning. He will be discussing
economic matters with Soviet leaders.

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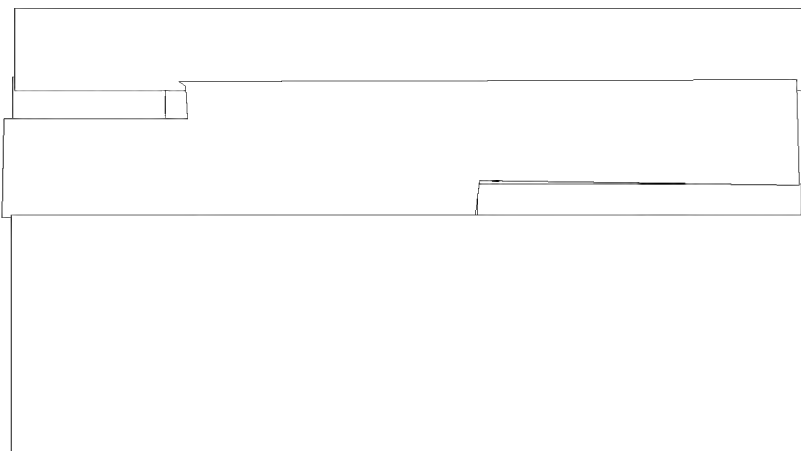
1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

There is little to indicate that talks between Kuznetsov and Czechoslovak leaders are resolving outstanding differences.

Prague, however, continues to provide newsmen with optimistic copy about the visit of the Soviet deputy foreign minister. This morning's Washington Post, for instance, quotes Czechoslovak sources stating Kuznetsov is offering a "compromise plan" including a timetable for withdrawal of foreign troops. Prague leaders would like such a compromise and it is undoubtedly being discussed, but thus far there is nothing to suggest this is Kuznetsov's mission.

The Soviets, meanwhile, have again turned a critical eye on the Czechoslovak press. After several days, during which Russian commentators had used a reasonably balanced line, TASS last night issued a statement blasting Czechoslovak newspapers for taking "antisocialist positions."

2. Soviet Union



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3. East Germany

The East Germans have interned Czechoslovak citizens who were visiting East Germany at the time of the invasion. The Czechoslovaks are being detained in camps on the Baltic coast where they apparently are being "re-educated."

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4. Panama

The French told Arias they will consider a larger investment in Panama. Among the projects discussed during Arias' Paris visit were a dam, industrial development in the Colon Free Zone, and more French technical aid. At present, French economic involvement in Panama is minimal. Arias is now in New York.

5. France

De Gaulle is preoccupied with France's own problems. This was clear from the short shrift given to foreign affairs in yesterday's presidential press conference. There was no mention of Vietnam nor substantive reference to the US.

For Frenchmen, there was little new in what the General had to say, although he left no doubts that he would move quickly and harshly if there are new outbreaks. As described by Ambassador Shriver, the conference was "poor food for hungry sheep."

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The second French thermonuclear device detonated Sunday

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Press reports from Paris state this will conclude the 1968 test series.

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6. Mexico

Mexican students have found they are able to exercise some influence on national affairs and they will be heard from again.

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Diaz Ordaz' main concern was restoring order before the Olympics open on 12 October, and he did not react to the disturbances with his usual dynamism. This may change after the Olympics, but, for now, the students feel they have put dents in the government's control apparatus.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Report from Hanoi: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] authorities [REDACTED] are actively preparing for the postwar period but trying to avoid giving any signs of this to the United States. [REDACTED] for instance, [REDACTED] a population census had recently been completed [REDACTED] to assist postwar planning. The census was not publicized [REDACTED]

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These comments add to a growing body of evidence of increased attention in Hanoi to the problems and opportunities a postwar situation will bring. The evidence is too thin to support any solid conclusions about Communist intentions, however. Some reports could reflect only normal stocktaking by Hanoi in the wake of US bombing restrictions as well as contingency planning against the possibility of an early end to the war.

[REDACTED] also claimed that civil defense precautions against resumption of US air attacks have faltered. [REDACTED] that no more air raid shelters are being built in Hanoi, that government offices have resumed normal operations in the city, and that people are ignoring the regime's efforts to uphold population evacuation and dispersal policies.

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Hanoi Observations: [REDACTED]50X1
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Communications: A conference of outstanding truck drivers was held in Hanoi in mid-August. With such slogans as "Let's love our trucks as our sons and prize fuel as our blood," the conference made front page news, and the First Secretary of the Lao Dong party, Le Duan, addressed the drivers with extravagant words of praise. For those of us who are not allowed to drive in Hanoi because it is "too dangerous," and have observed the almost incredible lack of road discipline, consideration, technique, and thought of the drivers in Hanoi, and the obvious inefficiency of the maintenance procedures, it was refreshing to read Nhan Dan's editorial on 14 August which launched out into an attack on lack of training, bad discipline, and disobedience of the rules. It commented, in a remarkable statement of the obvious, that political consciousness was not enough: technical training was also necessary.

Savings Campaign: The regime is making fresh efforts to encourage long-term saving. After a long period of attempting to achieve their objective by offering prizes to those depositors who drew a lucky number, the Council of Ministers has now decreed that depositors leaving their money in the bank for five years will be entitled to 2 percent on their deposit. Newspaper reports claim, in curious contrast, that savings are increasing.

Market Prices and Wages: There has been some talk [REDACTED] of rising prices, but [REDACTED] the tale does not seem to be substantiated. There are temporary changes due to weather conditions or seasonal disappearance of certain foods, but [REDACTED] no evidence of a long-term trend of rising prices on either the free market or the black market as a whole. There is no change in official prices for basic rations nor in wage rates.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Reaction to Mansfield/Goldberg Statements: The North Vietnamese delegation in Paris has responded quickly with at least qualified approval of statements made recently by

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former Ambassador Goldberg and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield. According to Western wire service reports, the North Vietnamese spokesman in Paris said that both Mansfield and Goldberg, when "faced with reality," had arrived at the "realistic position" that the bombing must stop before progress can be made in Paris. In response to a question, the spokesman emphasized that a bombing halt must be accompanied by the cessation of "all acts of war" against North Vietnam and the recognition and inclusion of the Liberation Front in any discussions affecting South Vietnam.

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